

Inspiring all Learners: Differentiating Instruction in the Inclusive Classroom



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People First Language

Language shapes and reinforces our attitudes toward others. Therefore, the words that many people use to describe individuals with disabilities must change before these citizens are viewed as equal members of our society.

Disability labels focus on what the individual cannot do rather than the person's abilities. People First Language looks at the individual before the disability. A disability is something that an individual has, not what an individual is.

Here are some examples of People First Language:

- Adam is a young boy *with* cerebral palsy.
- Jason is a thirteen-year-old *with* a learning disability.
- Alex is a kindergartner *and has* autism.
- A family has a son *with* Down Syndrome.
- Lucy *uses a* wheelchair.

Notice how much more positive People First Language sounds than saying a CP boy, a learning disabled teen, an autistic kindergartner, a Downs son, or a wheelchair bound girl.

As our language changes, perceptions and attitudes also change. People First Language helps in the movement toward the acceptance, respect, and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. If you do not know what to say, ask the person who has the disability to help put you at ease. Just ask what term makes them feel comfortable. Respect their language and remember, they are the experts.

Consider the following introduction of a friend who does not have a disability. "This is my good friend, Molly Stone. She grew up in Maine and has always loved art. Now she works as a landscape painter. She also is taking an Italian cooking class." Molly sounds like an interesting person. We are now able to talk about Maine, painting or Italian food. Molly's introduction was positive and it did not say what she cannot do or include negative information.

Why should the introduction of a friend who just happens to have a disability be any different? How would it sound if we introduced a friend with a disability as, "Her name is Kelly. She is retarded, but she can talk though. And, she is an epileptic too." What a showstopper. How can anyone build on this? No one wants to be identified by something they cannot do or control.

All individuals are made up of several characteristics. An individual's disability is just one part of them. People First Language takes the focus off of the disability and places it back on the individual.

Reflection on Belonging

Think of a time when you truly connected to someone, like you belonged or were a part of something

How did you feel?

How did you act?

Think of a time when you felt disconnected from something, like you did not belong or were left out of something?

How did you feel?

How did you act?

Causton-Theoharis, 2009

Inclusive Education

Norman Kunc

Kunc, N.(1992). The need to belong. Rediscovering Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In Principle, inclusive education means:

...the valuing of diversity within the human community. When inclusive education is fully embraced, we abandon the idea that children have to become "normal" in order to contribute in the world...We begin to look beyond typical ways of becoming valued members of the community, and in doing so, begin to realize the

achievable goal of providing all children with an authentic sense of belonging (pp. 38-39).

In Practice, inclusive education means:

A Classroom Model in which students with and without disabilities are based in a general education classroom and benefit from shared ownership of general and special educators.

A Student-Centered Approach Beginning with Profiles that help educators appreciate the strengths and challenges of learners with and without disabilities and the individualized accomplishments that can be attained.

A Schedule that accounts for the full range of needs in the class—where no student engages in “pull out” or alternative activities to the extent that disruptions in the daily schedule and in peer relationships do not occur.

A Curriculum that is rich and accommodating for all students—and when further individualized to meet the needs of a particular learner.

A Teaming Process in which support staff work in flexible, coordinated ways to strengthen the collaborative relationships among special and regular educators, parents, and the community.

A Classroom Climate that embraces diversity, fosters a sense of social responsibility, and supports positive peer relationships.

Fair

You are a nurse in the emergency room and 12 people come in all at the same time with various emergencies. You need to place the people in an order where the first person (1) to be taken care of is the most critical and the last person (12) is not critical at all.

With your partner, number these emergencies in the order you think they should be taken care of 1-12.

___A woman in labor

___A person having a stroke

___A child with a broken leg

___A teen with a cut off finger

___A person in a coma

___A man with a collapsed lung

___A man with a severe cut on his head

___A baby with a temp of 104

___A boy with a bad nose bleed

___A man having a heart attack

___A girl with a pole through her leg

___A boy with a pencil stuck in his arm

Causton-Theoharis, 2009

Diner Menu—Photosynthesis



Appetizer (Everyone Shares)

- Write the chemical equation for photosynthesis

Entrée (Select One)



- Draw a picture that shows what happens during photosynthesis.
- Write two paragraphs about what happens during photosynthesis.
- Create a rap or song that explains what happens during photosynthesis.

Side Dishes (Select at Least Two)



- Define respiration, in writing.
- Compare photosynthesis to respiration using a Venn diagram.
- Write a journal entry from the point of view of a green plant.
- With a partner, create and perform a skit that shows the differences between photosynthesis and respiration.

Dessert (Optional)



- Create a test to assess the teacher's knowledge of photosynthesis.

The Access Center, a project of the American Institutes for Research, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Cooperative Agreement #H326K020003



Diner Menu—Photosynthesis



Appetizer (Everyone Shares)

-

Entrée (Select One)



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-
-

Side Dishes (Select at Least Two)



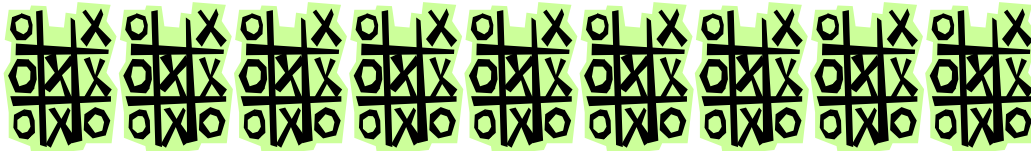
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Dessert (Optional)



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Think Tac Toe

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